



COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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Memorandum

To: All County Employees **Date:** September 22, 2020

From: Mark Schwartz, County Manager DocuSigned by:
Mark Schwartz
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Subject: Policy Requiring Face Coverings for Visitors in County Facilities

As we consider emerging safe practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to encourage the use of online services and virtual meetings for the general public and County staff to safely access County services. Consistent with the Center for Disease Control's guidance, and after consultation with the County's Public Health Division Chief, we have concluded that covering the mouth and nose is an effective means to limit the transmission of coronavirus. Face coverings may prevent the person wearing the mask from spreading respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing, or coughing. Since people may spread the virus before symptoms start, or even if people never have symptoms, wearing a face covering may protect others around you. Face coverings worn by others may protect you from getting the virus from people carrying the virus.

As additional information becomes available on best practices and scientific data, this guidance may be amended as appropriate.

Purpose

This policy provides guidance to visitors to County facilities regarding when they are required to use face coverings when indoors while visiting County facilities. County management reserves the right to determine whether any specific face covering meets the requirements outlined in this policy.

NOTE: County employees are required to wear face coverings per separate County policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all visitors, aged ten and over, when inside County Facilities.

Definitions

Face Covering: A covering fitted over the mouth and nose for the effect of inhibiting transmission of respiratory particles. A face covering under this policy may be a reusable cloth face covering or a commercially available, disposable face covering.

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Cloth Face Covering: Refers to any cloth/fabric covering for the face, for the purpose of covering the mouth and nose completely and with the effect of inhibiting transmission of respiratory particles. Cloth face coverings shall:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face;
- Be tied or otherwise secured to prevent slipping without being held in place by your hands;
- Fully cover the mouth and nose;
- If using a folded bandana or scarf, include multiple layers of fabric;
- Allow for breathing without restriction; and
- Be able to be laundered and machine-dried without damage or change to shape.

This term is not intended to indicate any medical or otherwise graded face covering.

Coronavirus: The novel coronavirus, which causes COVID-19.

County Facilities: Buildings and other structures owned, leased, or controlled by Arlington County Government or any other legal entity established by or under the control of the County Board of Arlington County.

Physical Distancing: The practice of keeping a minimum safe distance of six feet from other people in public places during the outbreak of a contagious disease in order to minimize exposure and reduce the transmission of coronavirus.

Intended Use

Face coverings are used to keep a person from potentially transferring respiratory droplets to others. Proper physical distancing, handwashing, refraining from touching one's face, and wearing face coverings, taken together, have been shown to be effective in slowing the spread of coronavirus.

Face coverings are not intended to replace the consistent practice of physical distancing or personal hygiene habits such as frequent hand washing and avoiding touching one's face.

Visitors in County Facilities

All visitors ten and over must wear a face covering at all times while inside County Facilities. It is recommended that children ages 2–10 do the same. Departments may at their discretion provide single use face coverings to visitors to facilitate provision of services. Visitors shall continue to practice physical distancing and personal hygiene when wearing a face covering wherever possible.

Face coverings are not intended to allow visitors who are showing symptoms of an infectious illness, such as the cold, flu, or coronavirus, to visit County Facilities. Visitors who are sick or who suspect they may be sick should stay home.

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There may be times when a visitor may remove their face covering temporarily in accordance with County provided instructions or other specifically applicable County policies, such as while speaking during the public comment portion of a public meeting, while exercising, or when needed to secure government or medical services, provided the visitor maintains physical distancing from others as required for that activity. At all other times the face covering shall be worn.

Accommodations

Visitors shall comply with this policy at all times. Any visitor who cannot use a face covering for medical or other reasons may notify County Staff either in advance of their visit or at the time of the visit that they require an accommodation and ask for an alternative method of service delivery. Requesting accommodations in advance of visits will prevent delays in service delivery.

County Staff will determine what alternate method of service delivery is available. If County Staff is unable to promptly provide an alternative method for service delivery, the visitor will be provided information to contact the appropriate department remotely to arrange delivery of the desired services. Contact information will be made available by County Staff at the County Facility.

Any visitor who declines to wear a face covering because of a medical condition shall not be required to produce or carry medical documentation verifying the stated condition nor shall the person be required to identify the precise underlying medical condition.

Enforcement

County Staff working at each County Facility, with the assistance of County security guards when available, will enforce the visitor policy on face coverings. County Staff shall deny entry to any visitors who fail to comply with this policy. Visitors not wearing face masks in accordance with this policy will be asked to leave County Facilities. If a visitor refuses to comply with this policy or to leave the County Facilities after being requested to do so, the police may be requested to provide assistance.

cc: County Board
Reuben Varghese, Public Health Division Chief
ELT

County Visitor Face Covering Policy FAQs

1. What is the visitor face covering policy?

The visitor face covering policy establishes requirements for the wearing of face coverings by County residents and visitors while visiting County-owned, leased, and controlled facilities.

2. Who needs to follow the face covering regulations?

This policy provides guidance to County residents and visitors regarding the use of face masks at County facilities. There is a separate policy for employee face coverings intended for County employees, contractors and volunteers.

3. Why do Arlington visitors need to wear a face covering?

Consistent with the Center for Disease Control's guidance, and after consultation with the County's Public Health Director, the County has concluded that covering the mouth and nose is an effective means to limit the transmission of coronavirus.

Face coverings may prevent the person wearing the covering from spreading respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing or coughing.

Since people may spread the virus before symptoms start, or even if people never have symptoms, wearing a face covering may protect others around you.

Face coverings worn by others may protect you from getting the coronavirus from people carrying the virus.

Proper physical distancing, handwashing, refraining from touching one's face, and wearing face coverings, taken together, have been shown to be effective in slowing the spread of coronavirus.

4. Are there exceptions to the Visitor Face Covering policy?

There may be times when a visitor may remove their face covering temporarily in accordance with County provided instructions or other specifically applicable County policies, such as while speaking during the public comment portion of a public meeting, while exercising, or when needed to secure government or medical services, provided the visitor maintains appropriate physical distancing from others as required for that activity. At all other times the face covering shall be worn.

5. If I don't wear a face covering, how can I get what I need?

To accommodate residents and visitors, we now allow for access to services online and over the phone. Staff can provide contact details at the front desk. If services cannot be provided remotely, residents may contact the service area directly to identify an alternate means of providing services. Contact information can be obtained online at <https://services.arlingtonva.us/> or by phone at (703) 228-3000.

6. Do children have to wear face coverings?

Children under 10 are not mandated to wear face coverings, however, we recommend they do so for their own protection, as well as the protection of those around them.

7. What is considered a Face Covering?

A Face Covering can be a cloth/fabric covering for the face, that is at least two layers of fabric and covers the mouth and nose completely, fits snugly on the face, and is secured without being held in place by your hands. A commercially available, disposable face covering is also acceptable provided it

is secured in place without using your hands and fully covers your mouth and nose. Masks with exhale valves do not meet these requirements as they do not fully cover the mouth and nose at all times.

8. Can I enter County property if I am sick but still wearing a face covering?

Visitors who are sick should stay home and access services remotely.

9. What should I do if I see another person violating this policy?

Please report the policy violation to security guards at the points of entry, or your supervisor.

10. Do I need to wear a face covering outdoors too?

No, this policy only applies to indoor environments owned, operated, leased, or managed by the county.